

Crises in the Handloom Industry of Andhra Pradesh

1545. SHRI RABI RAY: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the master weavers in the handloom industry in Andhra Pradesh have been compelled to reduce their production considerably due to glut in the market;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government have made a survey regarding the dwindling income of the weavers, and

(d) if so, the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI ASHOK GEHLOT): (a) & (b). The State Government of Andhra Pradesh have reported that the weavers of Prakasam District engaged in the production of exportable varieties of lungies and check shirting are currently facing the problem of under-employment due to slump in the market for lungies in the countries of politically disturbed Burma and flood affected Bangladesh.

(c) A census of Handlooms at the national level covering inter alia certain data on the socio-economic aspect of handloom weavers was conducted by the Government of India through the State Governments during 1987-88. One of the findings of the census revealed that about 7% of the total weaver households earned only up to Rs.200/- per month from all sources.

(d) In order to ensure higher earnings for the handloom weavers and to improve their socio-economic conditions, the Government have been making efforts through various measures such as:-

- (i) Financial assistance for modernisation of looms;
- (ii) Scheme of decentralised training to train weavers on improved technology;
- (iii) Scheme of training a cadre of 'Bunkar Sevaks' for assisting weavers in transfer of improved technology;
- (iv) Protection to handlooms by reserving certain varieties of cloth for their exclusive production in the handloom sector;
- (v) Design support and provision of technological inputs through a number of Weavers' Service Centres in the country;
- (vi) Special fiscal concessions to the handloom sector to remove the cost handicap of handlooms vis-a-vis the powerlooms;
- (vii) Thrift Fund Scheme which covers Group Insurance Scheme;
- (viii) Market Development Assistance Scheme including Special Rebate, Share Capital Assistance to Apex Societies and State Corporations to give market support to handloom products; and
- (ix) The Janata Cloth Scheme under which it is ensured that reasonable level of wages is paid to handloom weavers.

Government has also announced a new Scheme entitled "Margin Money for Destitute Weavers" to be implemented during the current financial year for the benefit of handloom weavers living below poverty line.

Smuggling of Narcotics

1546. SHRI VILASRAO NAGNATHRAO GUNDEWAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been enormous increase in the smuggling of narcotics since last year;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps being taken or proposed to be taken to check it?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR): (a) to (c) It could be seen from the data on seizures of important drugs of abuse given in the enclosed statement that the quantity of seizures of the two most important drugs i.e. Heroin and Hashish have declined during the last two years. At the same time the number of cases of trafficking of these drugs during the last two years has shown increase. This clearly indicates that the trafficking of these drugs has come down due to the fear of being caught by enforcement agencies. The increase in the number of cases shows the effective action taken by enforcement agencies against trafficking. More seizures and cases have been effected in ganja and methaqualone during the years 1990 and 1991 which indicates the alertness of enforcement agencies.